

HONORING ALL WHO SERVED

This month we remember with gratitude the veterans who answered our nation's call to duty in the quest for peace and freedom at home and around the world. Thank you for your service!

SENATOR JASON ALLEN

CONTACT INFORMATION

P.O. Box 30036 • Lansing, MI 48909-7536

Toll-Free (866) 525-5637

senjallen@senate.michigan.gov

www.senate.michigan.gov/allen



MICHIGAN THANKS OUR CITIZEN-SOLDIERS

The state's fledgling Military Family Relief Fund has accepted over \$1.2 million in donations from grateful Michigan residents since the start of the year. The fund provides special assistance to qualifying families of members of the Michigan National Guard or Reserves who are serving in the war on terrorism. Need-based grants are awarded to help cover clothing, food, housing, utilities, medical services and other daily living expenses. Families may apply for assistance by calling toll-free 1-866-271-4404 or visiting www.michigan.gov/dmva.

The Military Family Relief Fund Act was created by the Legislature last year as a way to support the Michigan citizen-soldiers who keep our families and communities safe and secure. Donations can be made through a check-off box on the state income tax form, or by a direct contribution. Find out more at www.michigan.gov/dmva.

MICHIGAN HONORS U.S. ARMED FORCES

Under a new law, our state now has a formal, public way to honor the men and women who serve our country in the U.S. armed forces. Under Public Act 402 of 2004, the flag of each branch of service is flown over the State Capitol on its founding date. The commemoration dates are:

U.S. Army – June 14

U.S. Coast Guard – Aug. 4

U.S. Air Force – Sept. 18

U.S. Navy – Oct. 13

U.S. Marine Corps – Nov. 10

NEWS ABOUT MICHIGAN

- ★ Over 2,300 Michigan National Guard Soldiers and Airmen are currently serving overseas in Iraq, Kuwait, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Guantanamo Bay Cuba.
- ★ More than 600 Michigan Guard Members assisted in hurricane relief efforts along the Gulf Coast this fall.
- ★ The Great Lakes National Cemetery in northwest Oakland County has now opened. It is the second national cemetery in Michigan, joining the Fort Custer site near Battle Creek. For more information, visit www.cem.va.gov/nchp/greatlakes.htm.

HELPING DISABLED VETERANS

Companies owned by disabled veterans will find it easier to get state contracts under Senate legislation passed into law this summer. Public Act 91 of 2005 calls on the Department of Management and Budget (DMB) to meet a goal of awarding 3 percent of state contracts to qualified disabled veteran-owned businesses. The law is an important way to assist those servicemen and women who become disabled while serving our country. To find out more information on state contracting, go to www.michigan.gov/doingbusiness.

RESOURCES FOR VETERANS:

- ★ Visit www.michigan.gov/dleg for employment assistance or training services. Click on *Agencies and Commissions* to find *Veterans Services*. Link to veterans' employment specialists throughout the state. Vets can also call toll-free 1-800-455-5228.
- ★ The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs website is a one-stop resource for information on health, education, insurance and home loan benefits. Access the *Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents* booklet online. Go to www.va.gov or call 1-800-827-1000.
- ★ Visit www.michigan.gov/dmva for information on Michigan's National Guard units.
- ★ Keep up-to-date on state homeland security issues at www.michigan.gov/homeland.

SENATOR ALLEN joined with area veteran's posts and his colleagues as the Michigan Senate opened session on Thursday, May 26th with a solemn tribute to our nation's fallen soldiers. Special honor was given to those Michigan servicemen who lost their lives as a part of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom during the past year. If veteran's organizations wish to participate in the Memorial Day ceremony at the Capitol in 2006, please contact Senator Allen's office at 1-866-525-5637.

SEN. ALLEN SPONSORS PURPLE HEART MONUMENT BILL

Michigan could soon join 43 other states in paying tribute to our servicemen and women wounded in action. Senate Bill 764, sponsored by Senator Allen, would place a monument honoring Purple Heart recipients in Veterans Memorial Park, located in the State Capitol complex. The expenses would be covered by the Military Order of the Purple Heart. This national organization is working to put identical monuments at each state capitol. The Purple Heart is the oldest military decoration in the world currently in use and the first American award made available to the common soldier. It was initially created as the Badge of Military Merit by General George Washington.

